SALAM MISSION
TO
KANDAHAR PROVINCE
4 - 12 JULY 1989

RIFFAT SARDAR

OPERATION SALAM

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I. Introduction.

1. Overview.

The war has taken a heavy toll in Kandahar province. Graveyards with ragged flags indicating the tombs of mujahedeen and piles of stones for the civilian casualties can be seen everywhere. The magnitude of destruction varies from area to area but is generally higher along strategic supply routes and as one gets closer to Kandahar city. Entire villages have been wiped off the map. Many others are decaying because of abandonment. All public buildings -- schools, hospitals, administrative offices -- appear to have been systematically destroyed. Although major physical infrastructures such as dams, highways and bridges are still in place, there has been no maintenance for the past ten years. Some structures have been stripped of whatever could be removed and sold : motors of flour mills, power lines and even pylons are gone. Rural roads are often in passable condition, but have suffered from lack of maintenance, destruction of small bridges and culverts and the additional wear and tear of traffic which could not travel on the main roads. Irrigation systems, both underground <u>karezes</u> and small canals, also require extensive repair. Some have been deliberately destroyed. Trees which used to provide shade along the main highways have been systematically felled.

Although major croplands are relatively intact, direct damage to orchards and irrigation systems ,particularly karezes, as well as the displacement of population and abandonment have shattered the economy of the region. Bazaars have been destroyed and the reduced commercial activities that exist seem to have shifted to areas relatively unaffected by the war. Craftsmen and skilled workers have generally fled to Pakistan. Agriculture is mainly of a subsistence nature and the marketing of whatever surplus may be available is hindered by lack of transport and political barriers to the movement of commodities.

Despite the suffering and destruction signs of resilience and recovery are distinctly perceptible. In most areas sufficient food is being produced to feed the resident population. Some surplus -- fruits,raisins and cumin seed -- makes its way to Pakistan and even India. Most farmers have not waited for help from outside to start rebuilding the small irrigation channels which are vital to their crops. <u>Karezes</u> are being cleaned and many other small-scale rural development projects have been initiated with assistance from NGOs. A surprising amount of reconstruction of private houses appears to be underway.

The damage to the social fabric of the areas visited is severe. A whole generation of children have been denied the basic right to education. Not one school is functioning and there are barely a handful of <u>Madrasas</u>. Most teachers and

educated people have fled the area. Centralized systems for immunization and disease control have understandably collapsed and only piecemeal health care services are being provided through NGO-assisted clinics.

The war is still very much present in the province. Practically all adult males and even young boys carry firearms. The countryside is strewn with mujahedeen bases displaying a vast array of firepower. Semi-destroyed buildings such as schools are being used as ammunition dumps. The clatter of automatic firearms and the distant thud of rockets aimed at army positions around Kandahar can often be heard. The passing of a plane, even at very high altitude, immediately triggers volleys of antiaircraft fire. More importantly, the mission was unable to identify any effective civilian structures or authorities. The extent to which individual commanders had an inclination for reconstruction was difficult to assess. Cumulatively, the commanders and their men must total several thousand in Kandahar province, only a small portion of which seem to be directly active in military activities. After visiting several bases the inescapable impression of the mission was that a significant portion of the male population was sitting idle, neither engaged in peace nor war.

Given these circumstances, the mission is of the opinion that the present absorptive capacity for additional assistance is limited in the areas visited. There is scope for some incremental assistance to existing NGO-supported projects and a number of well-chosen new projects could be initiated. But no large scale assistance programmes whether implemented directly by the United Nations or through Afghan counterpart organizations appear to be possible for the time being. These will have to wait for a clarification in the political situation and for the emergence of a respected civilian authority. Indeed, in a fragmented society with a complex and multipolar power structure, the risk of UN assistance being utilized for political ends should not be underestimated. In several instances the mission noted that NGOs were being criticized for having established privileged relationships with certain commanders to the detriment of others.

2. Organization of the Mission.

The mission covered some 1.000 km in Kandahar province and visited the woluswalis of Maruf, Arghastan, Daman, Arghandab, Shawalicot, Khakrez Panjwai and parts of Maiwand. Dand had to be excluded from the trip because of ongoing military activity. The team went as far as Kandahar silo, barely a few kilometers from the city, without any apparent difficulty. A meeting with the Kandahar shoora had been initially scheduled on 12 July but had to be cancelled somewhat unexpectedly because many shoora members were either preparing for Eid in Quetta or involved in military activity around the airport. This was unfortunate since, given the respect that the shoora seems to command everywhere in the province, it was expected that the meeting would have been the high point of the mission. The UN team was nonetheless fortunate to meet with many commanders and a few tribal elders as well as with more than 30 local field staff working on NGO-supported projects. (See annexes 2 and 3 for detailed itinerary and list of persons met).

The mission on the UN side was composed of six international professionals from UNOCA, UNDP, UNHCR, UNICEF, WFP and HABITAT, two local national officers of UNHCR and WFP and two drivers. On the Afghan side it was accompanied by Akbar Saadat (an important Quetta-based NIFA officer), his assistant, Fathi Agha, Abdul Bari responsible for RAFA in Kandahar province and his assistant, Pashtoon. The whole team travelled in three white Land cruisers with UN markings and equipped with HF radio and walkie-talkies.

The logistical and security aspects of the mission were placed under the responsibility of Akbar Saadat who also provided an armed escort of 18 mujahedeen travelling in two pick-up trucks. The hospitality, generosity and warmth of all those -- commanders, maleks and NGO staff -- who welcomed the mission should be recorded here.

Given the nature, size and composition of the mission on the Afghan side, the UN team was not in a position to have as broad a range of contacts as would have been desirable. The very presence of such a large and powerfully armed escort was an inhibiting factor. It often proved difficult, if not impossible, to hold spontaneous, informal discussions.

The mission had its own schedule of projects to visit, many of which were funded from UN sources. This was not always possible because of time and on one or two occasions security constraints. Nevertheless, the team was able to collect a lot

of information through discussions and direct observation as well as through limited direct contact with the local population. All members considered the trip as an extremely valuable experience and returned to Quetta with their notebooks full.

3. Problems Encountered.

The main problems encountered were broken roads, mud, dust and sand. Fortunately one of the UN vehicles was equipped with a winch which proved to be providential when several vehicles got stuck in the mud. For the last few days of the mission the heat was extreme and trying. In addition the members of the team were plagued by mosquitoes and fleas.

No significant security problems were encountered, perhaps because of the large escort watching over the team. Tension between groups of mujahedeen was perceptible from time to time and the mission was unable to visit one project because of reported incidents between local commanders. Apart from the occasional remote rumble of artillery, the war seemed to be an altogether distant affair in most of the areas visited.

II. POPULATION MOVEMENTS.

1: Returnees.

A modest return of refugees from Pakistan back to Kandahar province has taken place after the winter. Shortly after Ramazan this movement appeared to be gaining in strength. On the basis of the mission's limited observations and discussions it is not possible to quantify the number of returnees. Movement appears to have been most significant towards areas where no fighting had taken place recently. In none of the areas visited was large scale return reported or observed.

It is difficult to determine whether returns are seasonal (related to the harvest/tilling the land) or permanent. Even seasonal movements might include several women rather than just the heads of family or other male members. In Arghastan, Maruf and Arghandab, however, a considerable number of families have returned to stay.

Following a decision by the Kandahar Shoora that repatriation should be discouraged, many Mujahedeen commanders have actively prevented returnee famil s from reaching their destination. From discussions it appears that some political parties (Ittehad and Hezb-i(K) and (H)) have been more active in implementing the Shoora's decision than other parties (particularly Mahaaz). The mission encountered a number of Mujahedeen road blocks in the border areas as well as further inside the province, which clearly performed a regulating function in the traffic of goods and possibly so persons.

The justification given for the Shoora decision was that, at present, no area was as yet safe enough for people to return, as the Government was still able to carry out air attacks. A ngst the local population considerable criticism existed a o the rationale behind the Shoora's decision to prevent returns.

2. Internally Displaced

Internally displaced people appear to be returning gradually to their places of origin. This is particularly true for areas North of the city. Areas around the airport and directly South of the city are still depopulated and the potential for returns, in view of the present security situation, are very limited indeed.

From discussions with a epresentative of the Kandahar Shoora and several commanders it became clear that the problem of internally displaced could become more acute. There are plans to encourage the civilian population to leave Kandahar city

before the actual 'decisive' attack would be launched by making available food and shelter outside the city. This attack is scheduled to take place when the weather becomes cooler.

From discussions with Mahaaz commanders however it seems that this party would never agree to an attack before the evacuation process has been 'completed'. Apparently, the Shoora was under the impression that it would receive support from donors to provide shelter and food to the evacuated

3. <u>Potential for Return</u>

The decision of the Kandahar Shoora to prevent returnees from reaching their destinations has been effective.In some districts, notably Arghastan, Arghandab and Maruf, there is certainly a potential for people to return. If this takes place, food assistance might have to be contemplated in the initial phase. The Shoora's motivation that none of the districts are safe is rather questionable, since the only security problem in some areas is the presence of armed groups of Mujahedeen, rather than a potential threat from the Government side.

A more realistic motive behind the decision might be the commanders' fear that their power would be drastically reduced in the event of a massive return, and consequent 'normalisation' of the situation. The prevention of repatriation by Mujahedin, although it has a regulatory effect, should be seen as an infringement on the right of voluntary repatriation.

In spite of the above it was indicated by several people interviewed in Khwajamulk bazaar, that further returns were expected after Eid, and that the efforts by Mujahedin to contain the repatriation had somehow slackened.

III. ECONOMIC ACTIVITIES

1. Agriculture.

General. Most of the economy of Kandahar Province is based on agricultural production, mainly in irrigated areas. Two sources of irrigation are prevalent; streams and rivers; and sub-surface water channels or karezes. Cropping is more or less divided between various fruit crops and field crops, including vegetables, forages and cereals. A small area is planted with narcotics. In some areas, dry land farming was seen, being devoted almost entirley to wheat production. It is estimated that dry land production accounts for only about 10% of the cultivated area in wheat.

Crops.

(i) Wheat is the primary cereal grain being produced throughout Kandahar with maize and barley as secondary crops. Wheat is the main food staple on which the population depends, and it accounts for the largest area under cultivation of any one crop. It is mainly irrigated, while a small portion is rainfed. White wheats are preferred by the people for breadmaking. Although seed for improved varieties has been provided by NGO's in certain areas, lower yielding local varieties predominate. The slightly higher elevation areas of Maruf and Arghestan had good yields with Zarghoon variety provided by an NGO. Quality factors of Zarghoon were also acceptable to local consumers. Improved, adapted varieties of wheat need to be identified for lower elevation areas such as Khakrez, Arghanda , Maiwand and Panjwai. It should be noted that in the higher areas of Maruf, both winter and spring planted wheat were seen. Winter wheat is planted in Novemeber, and spring wheat in April. Farmers prefer to grow winter wheat, as a better yield is obtained. Zarghoon was used for both the winter and spring plantings. Wheat production in all areas could be significantly increased by good seed of improved varieties, a better supply of fertiliser, and improvement of production practices. Farmers store their own wheat for seed and crop purposes without significant insect damage, due to the warm, dry conditions.

Although some importing of wheat from Pakistan was reported, indications are that the current crop harvest is above average, due to favourable growing conditions during the past season.
Barley and maize, being dried and stored, are primarily used as off-season fodder crops. A good crop of barley is currently being harvested, while maize is being planted after wheat. A few plots of partly grown maize were seen in some areas.

(ii) Fruit crops common to most of the sites visited are apricots, almonds, pomegranates, apples, figs, mulberry and grapes. The orchards and vineyards are irrigated and appear to produce excellent quality fruit. In particular locations however,

pest problems were reported. Chemical control of aphids on some fruits is being done in Arghestan, and in Khakrez on almonds and pomegranates. It should be noted that highly toxic chemicals banned in many countries are being used at some of the locations visited. The risk to humans from some of these materials cannot be overestimated. The use of methyl parathion, for example, should either be closely monitored or discontinued altogether.

At present there is over-production of fruit in relation to the resident population. This can be expected to change with a significant number of returnees. While some fruit is consumed locally, the remainder are either exported to Pakistan and India, or go unharvested. Grapes are a very important fruit in several locations (Arghandab, Khakrez,Keskenakhud, Panjwai). Grape varieties for raisin production are grown, and new driers (kishmishkhanas) are beign built and others repaired. Raisins exported to Pakistan and India command good prices, thereby justifying the investment in new driers. Income generated through export of raisins and fresh fruit is used to purchase other food staples and consumer goods.

(iii) Plots of various vegetables were seen, including cucumbers, tomatoes, okra, onions,squash etc. Watermelons are common in most areas, and a farmer at Maruf (high elevation) grows potatoes. All of these vegetables were seen in local markets. Several plots of lentils were seen. One field of groundnuts was also observed, with the farmer reporting that good yields are possible.

Alfalfa is an important fodder crop, being grown under irrigation in all locations visited. Field were at bloom stage, with harvesting for fresh fodder being done on an as-needed basis. It was reported that alfalfa seed is produced in small portions for further seedings. It should be noted that climatic conditions for alfalfa seed production seem to be excellent.

At two or three locations, particularly Khakrez, cumin had just been harvested. It normally yields well, but was adversely affected by insects this season, greatly reducing yields. A normal yield of cumin exported to India brings higher profits to farmers in Khakrez than any other crop.It is found wild on the hills in the area.

Irrigation systems

Although irrigation systems are basically intact, some karezes had been rendered useless due to lack of maintenance or deliberate bombing in the war. Cleaning was observed by the mission in several areas. Major surface irrigation canals, including the canal at Khwajamulk fed by the barrage across the Arghandab River, continue to deliver water to cropland. Some minor canals that suffered from lack of maintenance are being repaired as farmers return seasonally to tend their crops.

Soils

The soils of most of the areas visited seem to have good crop growth potential. They are mostly brownis and range from sandy to silty loams or silty clay loams. Depth ranges from shallow to deep. Soil samples were taken at six locations: Maruf, Arghestan, Arghandab, Khakrez, Keskenakhud and Panjwai. Although some salt efflorescence was observed along river areas, salinity does not appear to be a serious problem in crop production. Two water samples were taken; karez water at Khakrez, and a sample from the Arghandab river. All samples will be analysed i suitable testing facilities are found.

Land use capability

Most of the land seen is supporting agriculture suit le to its' use i.e. irrigable areas are producing fruit and crops and higher dry land areas are being grazed. However, in most areas, soils and land terrain were found which, if irrigated, would be suitable for crop production. This would neccesitate additional irrigation systems. A case in point is the Arghandab valley.

Farm Power

Before the war, bullocks were used as the traditional farm power. However, the effect of war has greatly reduced the number of bullocks available for cultivation. This, together with a lack of labour in many areas, has created vacuum for farm power. There is a demand for addition bullocks and tractors, as well as other implements such as ploughs, harrows, cultivators, scrapers, trailers and threshers. A small number of tractors and assorted implements were seen in most locations. Some of these had been supplied by NGO's. Threshers are needed for wheat harvest, but there appears to be a need for skilled operators and mechanics for such equipment. The tractors seen were Massey Ferguson.

Livestock

Livestock in the province is sheep, goats, cattle and camels. Anthrax is reported to be common in sheep and goats in most areas. Some eradication has been carried out by one NGO. Several truckloads of hides were seen heading for export to Pakistan via Kandahar city. Sheep hides reportedly fetch Rs 100 each.

Labour availibility

Labour was reported to be in short supply in most areas, except for Arghandab.

Technical expertise

In some areas, a few agricultural technicians trained before the war in Helmand and other agricultural secondary schools were said to be available

Local industries

Most local industries contribute to some degree to agricultural support (brick making,construction and transport.) A large flour mill on the outskirts of Kandahar city has not been functioning since early 1988 due to damage in the war. A large amount of wheat is said to be stored in its' silos, but is inaccessible due to the damage.

NGO's

The main NGO activity seen was being carried out by MCI at Maruf, Arghestan and Panjwai, wher tractors,seeds and fertilisers had been distributed. An MCI thresher was seen in operation at Arghestan. SCF is involved in field spraying and karez cleaning in Khakrez. VITA has supplied a thresher to Obatu and 400 oxen in the Maruf district, most of which were said to have disappeared. VITA was also reported to have activities in Panjwai. Information was obtained that ARC had distributed improved goats and fertiliser at Sawgany in Maruf district.

Crop Substitution

Two small fields of poppies were seen. Patches of cannabis were observed, particularly in Panjwai district. During the war farmers in Khakrez switched from wheat to poppies to avoid destruction of their wheat fields.by burning. Subsequently, lucrative production of cumin seed for export to India and Pakistan has supplanted poppy cultivation in some areas. Although cumin seed requires specific conditions for proper growth, its potential as a substitution crop should be explored further for other areas where poppy and cannabis are grown.

Conclusions

1. It does not appear there will any severe food shortages in the coming months.

2. There is good potential for the improvement of agriculture given the good soils, water availability, good climatic conditions,unused land, available export markets and the experience of Afghan farmers.

3. The destruction caused by the war has on the whole not affected agricultural land, except in areas which may need to be cleared of mines. There is substantial damage to agricultural

infrastructure, such as canals and kishmishkhanas. Add ional inputs of farm implements, improved seeds, fertilisers and a careful distribution of pesticides could further stimulate agricultural production.

4. Suitable Afghan personnel could be identified to eventually work as NGO extension agents after undergoing additional training.

5. In the absence of civilian authority and counterpart technical agencies, it would appear that NGOs should continue to be the principal channel for delivery of agricultural assistance.

2. Food Aid

No apparent urgent food needs were observed during the mission. Hardly any cases of severe malnutrition were seen.

Food prices, especially wheat prices, are high in relation to local incomes. Prices of wheat vary around 300 Afghanis per 4.5 kilos (equivalent to Rs 4.5 per kilo). This reflects the market price of wheat in Pakistan, plus transport costs, plus a profit margin for the trader. Access to food is thus limited by lack of purchasing power rather than ack of supplies. It is not clear whether the ongoing wheat harvest will bring down market prices.

A certain level of food aid could be considered in order to reduce food prices. An increase in food for work components in existing and new projects could be considered where possible. Another option currently being considered by WFP is the monetization of food aid. However it is clear that no large-scale food aid should be considered before there is massive return of refugees.

3. Commercial activities

The level of economic activity is surprisingly high in a country still at war.Many kinds of imported consumer goods, mainly from Pakistan, are found in the bazaars in Panjwai and Khwajamulk. Goods range from wheat and other food to clothing, shoes, pharmaceutical products and torches. Even ice is imported from Pakistan to chill soft drinks in the bazaar. Fuel is available in Panjwai, Khwajamulk and Amin Kalay.

The large bazaar in Arghestan was fou d to be destroyed and unused. There are, however, small shops selling tea, sugar, tobacco etc. in most district centres.

On the trunk roads and in market centres, there was considerable truck and bus traffic. Wheat and other food items such as sugar and tea are being carried, as well as fertilisers and other agricultural inputs. The mission saw trucks laden with tyres, and in one case, fridges. These goods are mainly brought in to Afghanistan in order to be smuggled to Pakistan. Fruit and vegetables are transported by road to Pakistan, and even as far as India.

Road blocks set up by the mujahedeen seem to control transport of some goods. The mission saw tyres, fertilizers and other consumer items being unloaded at a checkpost at Tarnak near the Kandahar-Kabul highway. On the other hand, trucks laden with hides were being sent for export by road via Kandahar city. Sheep and goats were said to be sent to Pakistan for the Eid festivities.

IV. PHYSICAL INFRASTRUCTURE.

1. Mines.

The situation with respect to mines was difficult to assess. When travelling, the mission was often given conflicting information by its escort as to whether or not mines were planted in the area. Some stretches of road, especially passes, were reported to be heavily mined, and indeed it was not infrequent to see piles or circles of stones presumably indicating the presence of mines. On the other hard, the escort and therefore the mission, did not appear to be taking any particular precaution : vehicles often wandered off the road, the escort and the mission walked across untilled fields or destroyed villages. It was hard to determine whether the escort -- which sometimes encountered obvious route finding problems -- really knew that there were no mines.

The issue of mines came up spontaneously very rarely, if at all, in conversations or interviews. When asked to prioritize problems in their areas, mines were never mentioned by our interlocutors. If asked, the standard eply seemed to be : "Yes, there have been many casualties", but if pressed further one would generally discover that these had occurred several years ago. The mission was only able to see a couple of recent mine victims.

By and large the impression was that if there were mines the villagers knew more or less where they were loc ed and avoided these areas (in particular strategic locations and former army posts). The mine hazard will obviously increase when families return, re-occupy their compounds and plough fallow fields.

Some mine clearance was reported to be underway : mujah een were said to have removed mines with sticks and had collected and burnt anti-personnel mines. The mission explained that the UN had set up a mine clearance training programme in Quetta. Only one commander had heard about it and the mission met no-one who had actually been trained. The mission recommended that if there were mines mujahedeen from the particular village should be sent to Quetta for training.

To conclude, there seems to be an obvious need for systematic dissemination of information on the UN mine clearance programme. The Kandahar shoora and the Quetta-based parties should perhaps be asked to send letters th basic information on the MCT programme to all comman rs in the province.

2. Roads.

(i) Major Routes

Before the war, Kandahar city was connected with Ka. . and the Western provinces by the main circular highway which runs through the whole country. It was furthermore connected to Pakistan by a branch-off from this highway leading South-East to Quetta via Chaman. The capital was linked to major district centres (Arghandab, Arghastan, Maruf, Khakrez, Panjwai) with secondary roads, which were and are usable only to the extent permitted by climatic conditions.

At present, the highway is only usable from Chaman up to Takhtepul, where all traffic is diverted, and from the Silo (West of Kandahar city) up to a branch-off 20 kms before the centre of Maiwand, which is still i.. Government hands. The highway towards Zabul appears, at least for the time being, to have been closed for all traffic. In the recent weeks, several attacks by government forces (tanks and areal attacks) have been carried out on Mujahedin posts along the road as well as traffic using the highway.

As a result of the precarious security situation of the main highway a number of alternative routes have been created in order to supply the Mujahedin and to carry supplies to various population centres. Road blocks have been set up to prevent food stocks from reaching the provincial capital. Unauthorised goods are impounded at these road blocks (the mission witnessed food stocks, fertilizer and one one occasion car tyres which had been confiscated). It is unclear whether taxes are being levied at these barriers.

Vehicles carrying goods which are in transit to Pakistan (e.g. hides) are allowed to use the highway and other routes at least for the parts which have not been closed off. As an alternative to the Chaman-Takhtepul-Kandahar highway, most vehicles presently use a route which branches off some 25 kms from Spin Boldak and leads through the desert towards Amin Kalay, Arghastan and from there up to Khwajamulk (Arghandab). As an alternative to the connection Kandahar- Helmand a route South of the highway is used, but this route is extremely bad and unusable for trucks. The mission was unable to establish whether there was a route through the desert and South of the city, connecting the districts of Panjwai and Dand with the highway South of Takhtepul. The importance of all the relief routes will reduce immediately when the main highway becomes usable again.

(ii) Road Conditions

The Highway The highway, in as .r as observed and travelled on by the mission, appears to be in a usable

condition. On some stretches (particularly in the direction of Maiwand, the road has suffered considerable damage as a result of mines which have been placed under culverts, and one half of the road can only be used to cross the culvert. Close to Spin Boldak parts of the highway seems to have been washed away by floods, and traffic has to be diverted on several occasions.

Secondary Roads. Secondary roads to major population centres are, with the exception of the road from Arghandab to Khakrez, in a very bad condition. This gravel road is generally in an excellent condition and requires only very minor repair, if any. The road is on average 4.5m wide and passable for all vehicles, including heavy trucks. The road leading from Spin Boldak northwards towards Arghastan and Maruf is in a very bad condition and appears to be unusable during the winter as a result of the flooded rivers. The road is used extensively by both passenger and goods traffic, but speed on most of this stretch does not exceed 15-20 km/h. Surface is mostly loose sand (up to 20 cm in certain places) with an uneven hard bottom layer. Travelling time from the main highway branch-off close to the city up to Spin Boldak is over 6 hours.

The road between Arghastan and Maruf is generally passable, with the exception of a number of mountain passes, where the rocky soil and the very narrow curves make truck traffic particularly difficult. The road is on average 3.5m wide, and the surface is sand and gravel.

The road from the highway up to Khwajamulk is in a fairly good state. However, it passes through several river beds and it is questionable whether during the winter trucks and other vehicles could cross the rivers. The surface of the road is mainly sandy, particularly for the first part which is a mere desert track.

Alternative Routes. At present, the most widely used connection to Arghandab and the city area is the branch-off after Spin Boldak which leads to Arghastan. This route has been discussed in the previous paragraph as it also forms the regular connection between the city and Arghastan/Maruf.

In view of the presence of a Government post at Keshkenakhud (Maiwand) all vehicles travelling in the direction of Helmand have to leave the highway. An alternative route North of the highway is not available, as the Government still controls a number of villages in that area. The alternative route South of the highway followed by the mission was hardly passable, even by four-wheel drive vehicles, as one encouters a number of narrow bridges built out of timber and branches, which are not able to allow any substantial traffic to cross.

An alternative route to the Northern provinces leads from Maruf Northwards, but this route was not followed.

Road Repair. It is questionable, whether some of the alternative routes, relevant for repatriation should be considered for major repairs, as their importance will decrease significantly with the reopening of the highway. However, in view of the present military situation in the province and that no large scale repatriation is taking place, some attention should be given to the worst stretches of these routes. A lot could be accomplished with minor inputs and available labour. It should be stressed, however, that even after upgrading all roads might become completely impassable in winter and spring, because of flooding of rivers and the absence of practically all bridges.

Shelter Now International is carrying out a road repair project on the Tarnak-Khwajamulk road. Given the importance of this road the project deserves further support and could be possibly be complemented with a food for work component. Some repair could also be envisaged on the Maruf-Arghestan road. Relatively modest inputs (filling of ditches) would greatly improve the road. The upgrading of these two roads would facilitate repatriation and access to Arghestan/Maruf, Daman, Arghandab and Panjwai. A mission with the relevant expertise might be launched to study further road-repair projects.

3. Shelter.

Needs

The need for replacement housing for a returning population is considerable in most of the areas visited. While there is some evidence of systematic destruction of housing ,the present need for shelter is mainly the result of the deterioration of abandoned homes. The Arghandab area (north of the river) seemed to be the most devastated, with up to 80% of housing rendered uninhabitable due to damage and decay. Settlements in Arghestan and Panjwai near centres that had been government posts, are also affected, with up to 60% of homes abandoned. In Khakrez and parts of Maruf damage to homes was relatively slight.

Reconstruction.

There was some house-building or repair under way in all the areas visited by the mission. Given the scale of destruction and decay in some parts, such reconstruction is minimal. Yet allowing for the fact that much of the population is absent in the worst-affected parts, such building activity is surprising. All the more so when there is evidence of villagers being discouraged from re-establishing themselves in some areas. In Keshkenakud and Khakrez, the priority seemed to be on reconstructing buildings for drying raisins (kishmeshkhanah) as a first stage of re-establishment, before families would return to settle.

Materials

Rural housing takes a variety of forms, and the basic materials are earth, timber, water and stone. In Maruf and Arghestan,timber is commonly used for roofing, with walls of earth. To the west in Arghandab and Panjwai, homes are roofed with brick vaults and domes. River stones may be used in foundations, and in some cases for walling. There is little evidence of acute shortages of any of these materials to meet the present pace of reconstruction. Timber is available, if expensive, in Maruf, where salvaged joists from older houses are also re-used for new homes. There appeared to be a surplus of building timber in Arghandab, with extensive cultivation beside canals, and some stockpiling of felled timber in the bazaar at Khwajamulk. Sun-dried bricks are made in all areas, while fired bricks are now only available in Kandahar city. Demand for bricks is likely to result in re-opening of kilns elsewhere, provided fuel for firing is available. If current restrictions on the transport of goods within the province are eased, local shortages could be met from areas of surplus. The availability of materials should present no obstacle to the replacement of damaged and destroyed homes in the region, if the process of return is a gradual one.

Labour and skills

There are considerable building skills in the areas visited by the mission. Most men have basic building abilities, which will enable them to rebuild at least part of their family homes when they return. Given the concurrent need for agricultural rehabilitation, there are likely to be short-term shortages of unskilled labour in some areas. The scale of this is impossible to predict, but it is unlikely to seriously affect the reconstruction of basic shelter. Specialist skills are required for the construction of domes and vaults, and for joinery for windows and doors.. The system of apprenticeship whereby skills are passed between generations has been disrupted by the war. A demand for bricklaying skills for reconstruction could be an incentive for young returnees to train in these skills if the process of return is a gradual one. The demise of brick vaults and domes, through a shortage of skilled masons, could create a greater demand for timber, whose use is not felt to require special skills.

Costs

Accurate building costs are difficult to establish in the present circumstances. On the basis of material and labour rates collected by the mission, some rough cost estimates for typical earth-walled homes may be made.

A home with three rooms (7metres by 3 metres) roofed with brick vaults, with a wall enclosing a yard of 20 metres by 20 metres might cost some 80,000 Afghanis, assuming that hired labour is used and there is no element of self-help. The major cost is for skilled bricklayers to construct vaults.

A home comprising three rooms (7metres by 3 metres) with a flat earth roof on timber joists, and a yard as above might cost 100,000 Afghanis, also assuming that hired labour is used for all construction. The major cost in this case is for timber joists and purlins.

Conclusions

a) The options for intervention in housing at present are limited, because the obstacles to widespread reconstruction are not technical.People are re-building in areas where they feel relatively safe, have the means to make some kind of livelihood, and are not prevented from re-establishing themselves by the commanders or others. Until these conditions prevail over a wider area, it would be unrealistic to expect refugees to return and invest in re-building.

b) There should be no material shortages for housing reconstruction if the process of return to the area is gradual.

c) In the event of significant return of refugees,there might be scope for training activities in bricklaying and joinery. This would help to meet the likely demand for skilled labour, and provide young men who have known nothing but fighting with some means of earning a living.

4. Storage Facilities.

Most warehouses in the province have been destroyed during the war. Storage at Kandahar silo and facilities at Spin Boldak were the only buildings seen in useable co: ..tion.

Kandahar silo itself has an estimated capacity of 20,000 MT, but cannot be used without repair of the structure and some replacement of machinery. There are six warehouses in the vicinity of the silo with an estimated cap... ity of 800 to 1,000 MT each. Three of these warehouses could be used after minor repair to corrugated iron roofing. The oth three would need more repair, but could be temporarily roofed with tarpaulins. Another large steel framed building near the silo has a capacity of about 1,500 MT and is useable condition.

In Spin Boldak a building of similar size (1,500 MT) in a condition that would permit immediate use.

On a smaller scale, NGO's are storing goods in private homes and compounds that have been abandoned. This is not felt to be a long-term solution to storage needs, for these premises will be needed in the event of return.

5. Canals and Dams/ Electrical Supply..

The Dahla hydroelectric dam was v ited by the mission and was found to be basically i act. Its potential to generate electrcity is at present limited to the local mujahedeen base. Power lines along the Kandahar Helmand highway had been stripped but the concrete pylons seemed to be largely intact. These supplied electricity to Kandahar city from the Khajakai dam in northern Helmand.

The important barrage at Kwajamulk and the diversion barrages on the Arghandab irrigation canal are intact and functionning.

V. SOCIAL CONDITIONS

1. Health

Due to the non existence of a co-ordinated health care system in Kandahar Province, the basic health needs of the rural population are not being met. Limited health services are provided by several NGO's and other agencies.

Health Care Providers

There are a wide range of health care providers in the province, who operate from different types of "clinics".Among these are Trained Health Care Workers (HCW's) who have had 3 to 18 months training under NGO's in Pakistan, graduate M.D's, self-appointed "doctors" with no formal training, Dai's or traditional birth attendants, Sheshkaband or traditional bone-setters, and other traditional healers.

The mission met a considerable number of trained HCW's, one graduate M.D. and one untrained "doctor". All of these were males. Health workers do not seem to be evenly distributed through the area. For instance we did not hear of a single trained health worker in Arghestan, while numerous contacts were made in Panjwai and Khwajamulk

Most of the HCW's met had recieved 3 to 6 months of training with their respective NGO's in Pakistan. Given the brevity of the training they receive, their knowledge and skills are on the whole impressive, but limited. The most serious problem seemed to be that HCW's working in isolated circumstances without supervision, and with no possibility for referral or re-training, find it difficult to maintain standards. This was more evident amongst HCW's with only three months training.There is hardly any referral of patients to other HCW's, and most cases were said to be referred to Pakistan. HCW's have a basic record keeping system (the green book) but it was rarely seen to be properly used.

The task of HCW's at present is a difficult one. They are under pressure to meet the expectations of the mujahadeen and the local population. In order to meet the image of a trained person, and perhaps to raise their social and financial status, it is tempting to operate beyond their skills. Most clinics are under the control of specific commanders or parties. This reduces their effectiveness by discouraging consultation between HCW's and limiting referral of patients.

In most areas visited by the mission, the emphasis of health care seemed to have changed from first aid for mujahadeen towards health care for the general population. This change requires a different attitude on the part of the HCW, who will need to pay more attention to preventative health care.

The re-training of motivated HCW's should be seen as a priority. There might also be a case for increments in salaries according to training received. This could help HCW's to compete with the popular untrained "doctors", some of whom follow dangerous practices.

Public Health

The HCW's grasp of the issues of public health, water, sanitation and health education needs improvement. Few of the HCW's interviewed made the connection between water-borne diseases and poor sanitation althoughthis may not be a priority in the present de-populated countryside, the problem will be exacerbated by the return of refugees. The possibility of increased use of hand pumps for protected water supply, and further health education may be explored.

Medicines

NGO's supply their HCW's with by and large the same range and quality of medicines, according to their training. Some HCW's supplement these stocks from the local bazaars or Kandahar city, paid for by the commanders or parties. Most HCW's complain of shortages, due to claims of a high number of patients. However, the mission noticed a tendency towards over-prescription and consumption of drugs, especially anti-biotics, analgesics and vitamins. HCW's should limit prescription to a number of basic and well-known drugs. Bazaars visited seemed well supplied with essential and non-essential drugs, and Kandahar city was said to be another source.

Both health care and medicines are now free of charge. While this may be justified in an emergency situation, it could have negative long-term effects. NGO's working in health might explore the possibility of nominal charges for their services.

Facilities

Former government clinics in the area have all been systematically destroyed or badly damaged. Most HCW's operate out of single rooms of traditional construction. The degree of cleanliness varies, and does not seem to relate to the level of training of the HCW. In most cases, sterilisation and medical waste disposal is lacking. The laboratories visited seemed to be under-utilised.

Mention was made in Panjwai of the possibility of referring patients to the hospital in Kandahar city.

Health priorities

General

Communicable diseases are widespread amongst the population. There is a need to plan future co-ordinated programmes such as Expanded Programme of Immunisation (EPI+TT for mothers and

children), Control of Diarrhoeal Diseases (CDD), Acute Respiratory Infections (ARI), Tuberculosis TB) and Malaria Control. While large-scale programmes are not feasible at present, there is scope for limited activities from the existing facilities

Women

Access to women of child bearing age, and accurate diagnosis and treatment by male HCW's is severely limited. No trained female HCW's were encountered during the mission. Limited obstetric care is provided by Dai's (traditional birth attendants). Most HCW's stated that maternal mortality is high due to lack of proper female health care.

There is a need to identify and train Afghan women as HCW's, midwives and M.D's. Trained female health staff could provide mother and child care and train Dai's in safe delivery practices and ante and post-natal care.

Recommendations

For the short-term:

1)In areas of need, training of new HCW's, using a standardised curriculum with more emphasis on public health, for a minimum of 6 months.

2)Re-training of existing motivated HCW's with more emphasis on public health, using a standardised curriculum,

3)Standardisation of salaries linked to the level of training attained.

4)Develop and increase monitoring and evaluation of existing health activities.

For the future, the following issues could be explored:

5)Identification and training of Afghan women as HCW's, midwives and M.D's.

6)Implementation of co-ordinated immunisation programme through the existing limited facilities. Planning for future co-ordinated programmes to prevent communicable diseases.

7)Identification of potential sites and staff for future regional health care facilities for supervision, training and referral.

2. Education

An entire generation of Afghans living in the rural areas during the war have been denied access to education. The consequences of this for the future will be devastating.

The mission was not able to visit a single functioning school in the region, nor establish if any existed outside Kandahar city. The ruins of five sizeable village schools (Arghestan, Khwajamulk, Arghandab, Panjwai and Keshkenakud) were seen, each systematically destroyed by mujahadeen after they had been vacated by the government. Another school at Shawalikot was intact, and seemed to be used as an ammunition store. Teachers have had to find alternative livelihoods, and many were said to have gone to Pakistan. There was only limited discussion about concrete plans for rehabilitation of educational facilities. A madrasa or religious school was being built by the local commander beside the shattered school in Arghestan (Khogyamay).

With a few exceptions, the mission saw little evidence that education is a priority for those at present in positions in power in the area. The local commander in Khakrez expressed an interest in education, but otherwise the subject was met with indifference.

The need for rehabilitation of the rural education system is immediate. Until there is some authoratative civilian structure to administer education, any intervention is likely to be used for political ends.

Existing links that NGO's have established with local authorities interested in education should be supported. There may be limited scope for school reconstruction in some areas, once teachers have been identified and educational material been developed.

3. Disadvantaged Groups

The mission was unable to identify specific vulnerable groups in the area.

VI. RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Given present circumstances and low absorptive capacity of the areas visited, no large scale UN assistance programmes should be considered for the time being. Since the regeneration potential appears to be good for agriculture, private housing and economic activities, the policies contained in the UN Plan of Action, which emphasize the development of small scale, locally based projects building on existing skills and expertise, should be retained.

2. While existing small scale activities implemented through NGOs are generally effective these organizations seem to be overstretched. There is scope for the strengthening of NGOs established in the areas visited and for bringing in new organisations with relevant expertise.

3. RAFA-Kandahar does not seem as yet to be an effective, independent partner. RAFA should prove its technical and administrative ability as a non-political organization acceptable to a wide spectrum of the society, before support from the United Nations can be considered.

4. In view of the present political circumstances and since there is no immediate emergency, no assistance programmes executed directly by the UN should be contemplated for the time being.

5. The United Nations should aim to develop its links and clarify its relationship with the Kandahar shoora. Together they should identify acceptable mechanisms for equitable humanitarian assistance programmes which fulfill the criteria of the UN Plan of Action.

ANNEX 1

COMPOSITION OF THE MISSION

Antonio Donini, UNOCA (Team leader)
Wayne Baumann, UNDP
Peter de Clercq, UNHCR
George Heymell, WFP
Jolyon Leslie, UNCHS (Habitat)
Rik Peeperkorn, UNICEF
Sayeed Shah, UNHCR
Shah Hussein Osmanzai, WFP

ITINERARY

Salam Mission to Kandahar province lasted from 4 July to 12 July 1989.

4 July	dep	Quetta	06:45	0 km
		Killa Abdullah	08:15	93 km
	arr	Alla Jarga	10:00	134 km
	dep		10:40	
	arr	Manzakai (Pak-Afghan border)	12:00	153 km
	arr	Shiska (Spinwal)	12:40	191 km
	dep		15:15	
	arr	Salisoon	16:30	213 km
	arr	Maruf (1st night at Maruf)	19:40	258 km
5 July	dep	Maruf	06:30	258 km
	arr	Abatu (centre)	09:00	280 km
	dep		17:00	
	arr	Arghastan (2nd night at MCI centre)	22:10	347 km
6 July		(3rd night at MCI centre)		
7 July	dep	Arghastan	07:10	347 km
	arr	Amin Kala		
		H. Habibullah Kalay (Daman Distt.)		
		Tarnak river	11:30	418..km
		Khawaja Mulk		
		Naseerabad		
		Khosru (Arghandab) (Spent night here)		
8 July	dep	Arghandab	07:15	
	arr	Char Khulba (Arghandab)	08:10	
		Mia Shin Kalay		
		Dahla (dam) (Spent night here)		
9 July	dep	Dahla	07:20	566 km
	arr	Khakrez (SCF Centre)	11:00	
	arr	Arghandab (Spent night here)	20:00	697 km
10 July	dep	Arghandab	07:15	697 km
	arr	Silo (Kokaram)	07:45	
		Sanzari		
		Sang-e-Hisar (Maiwand)		746 km
	dep	Sang-e-Hisar	15:30	746 km
	arr	SILO		778 km

		Mirwais Neka Tomb		
		Zala Khan (Panjwai) (Spent night here)	18:00	795 km
11 July	dep	Zala Khan	06:30	795 km
	arr	Panjwai Bazar SILO		
	dep	SILO	16:00	
	arr	Dahla (Spent night here)	19:00	912 km
12 July	dep	Dahla	06:10	912 km
	arr	Tarnak (Kandahar-Kabul Highway)	08:15	960 km
		Amin Kala	10:40	1003 km
	dep		11:00	
	arr	Kandahar Boldak Highway	13:30	1065 km
	arr	Chaman	14:15	1114 km
	dep		14:45	
	arr	Quetta	17:30	1261 km

Annex 3

List of persons met during the mission

1. Health personnel

Name	NGO	Village
Mr. Adbul Malik, HCW	MCI	Abatu
Mr. Bridad, Lab: Tech.	MCI	Abatu
Mr. Robert Otiger, Delegate	ICRC	Mansurabad
Mr. ...., Nurse	ICRC	Mansurabad
Mr. Abdul Malik, HCW	MCI	Khwajamulk
Mr. Mohammad Wali, P.Supr.	MCI	Khwajamulk
Mr. Awawi. Dy. Commander		Char-Gul-Bagh
Mr. Mohammad Ikhla, HCW	MSH/SCA	Char-Gul-Bagh
Mulla Abdul Malik Akhwand, Commander		Mian Shuin
Mr. Abdul Haye, HCW	SCA	Mian Shuin
Mr. ...., Private HCW	MCI	Khwajamulk
Mr. ...., Private HCW	MSH	Khwajamulk
Mr. Gul Mohammad, HCW	MCI	Zelabad
Mr. Gul Hossein, HCW	MSH	Silo
Mr. Abdul Rahim, HCW	MSH	Sangisar
Dr. Jabbar, MD	MCI	Nakhuwi Panjwai
Mr. Ghulam Yahya, HCW .	MCI	Nakhuwi Panjwai
Mr. ...., Lab:Tech.	MCI	
Mr. Balouch, Untrained Dr.		Nakhuwi Panjwai
Mr. Noor Ahmad, HCW	IAHC	Panjwai

2. Other NGO Staff

- Mr. Rahmatullah	MCI Administrator	Abatu
- Mr. Ahmed Gul	MCI Asst.Administrator	Abatu
- Mr. Abdul Samad	MCI Plant protection	Abatu
- Mr. Niamatullah	MCI Vaccinator	Abatu
- Mr. Abdul Rahma Khan	MCI Administrator	Arghestan
- Dr. Taher	MCI Asst.Administrator	Arghestan
- Mr. Gul Mohd. Khan	MCI Food for Work proj.	Arghestan
- Mr. Redeh Gul	MCI Mechanic	Arghestan
- Mr. Dan Fast	MCI (Quetta)	Arghestan
- Mr. Jan Mohammad	SCF	Khakrez
- Mr. Saleh Mohammad	SCF	Khakrez

3. Commanders and village elders

- Sultan Mahmoud Ijrayyah	Mashar of Khogyamay (Arghestan)
- Abdul Raziq and village elders	Hajji Habib Kalay (Daman)
- Commander Lalai	Mansurabad (Arghandab)
- Commander Zabith Jalil (HIG)	Khwajamulk (Arghandab)
- Commander Khan Mohammad (Jamiat)	Char-Gul-Bagh (Arghandab)
- Commander Mullah Abdul Malik (Harakat)	Mian Shuin (Arghandab)
- Commander Hajji Lalai Agha (NIFA)	Dahla Dam (Arghandab)
- Commander (NIFA)	Shahboldin (Khakrez)
- Commander (former teacher)	Zelabad (Khakrez)
- Commander Malik Saadullah (NIFA)	Sangisar (Maiwand)
- Commander Molim Paida (Khalis) (current Chairman of Kandahar Shoora)	Panjwai

4. RAFA Offices

- Khogyamay (Arghestan)
- Hajji Habib Kalay (Daman)
- Khakrez
- Sangi Sar (Maiwand)

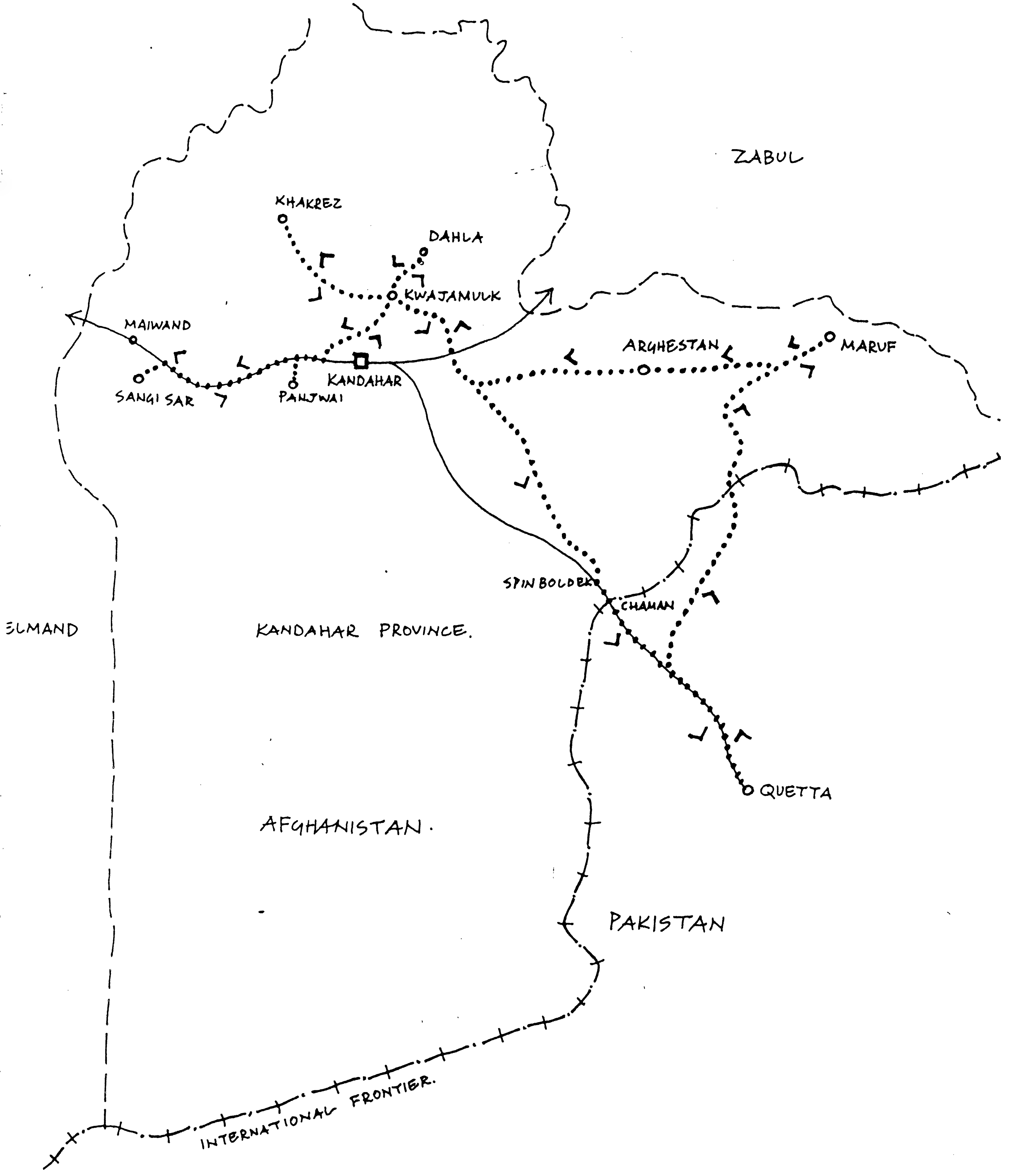
Commodity Prices in Kandahar Province (Afg./kg)

Item	Maruf	Argahstan	Arghandab	Khakriz	Maiwand	Panjwai
Wheat	55.55*	66.67*	55.56	-	55.56	54.00
Flour	55.55*	66.67*	58.82	55.56	70.59	67.50
Ed. Oil	377.77	333.33	380.00	413.33	533.33	366.67
Sugar	222.22	200.00	200.00	244.44	244.44	191.11
Green Tea	1100.00	1250.00	1350.00	1200.00	1350.00	1111.11
Black Tea	1000.00	1100.00	1480.00	1100.00	1410.00	1333.33
Rice high q.	-	177.78	200.00	-	177.78	200.00
Rice low q.	88.88	66.67	100.00	111.11	-	100.00
Corn	133.33	-	-	-	-	-
Potatoe	-	66.67	55.56	-	-	-

* As the wheat was local wheat preferred to imported wheat, the price was as high as the price for flour imported from Pakistan.

ANNEX 5.

MISSION ROUTE.

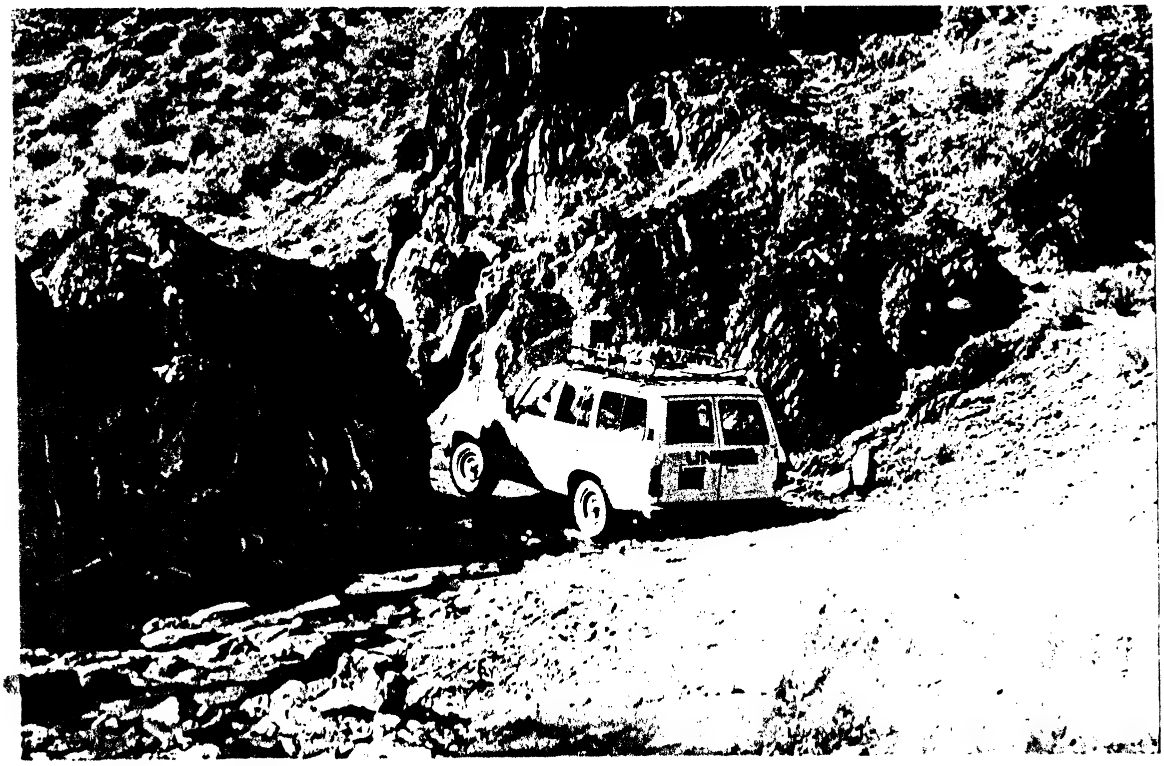




1. Salam Mission Members

2. Mission meeting at Sangisar (Maiwand)





3. The road between Maruf and Arghastan

4. The road near Khwajamulk





5. Farmers on their land near Maruf

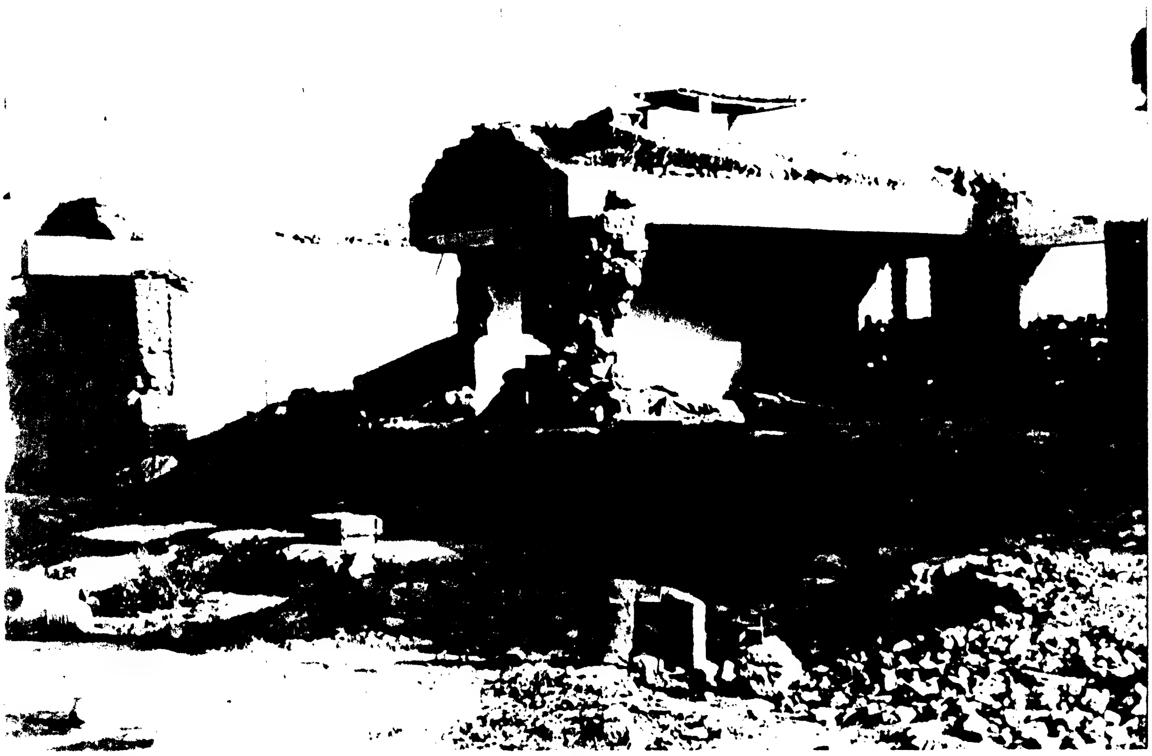
6. A stall at the busy Panjwai Bazaar





7. Health Care Workers in Abatu (Maruf)

8. The ruins of a school in Arghastan





9. Brother and sister in Arghastan

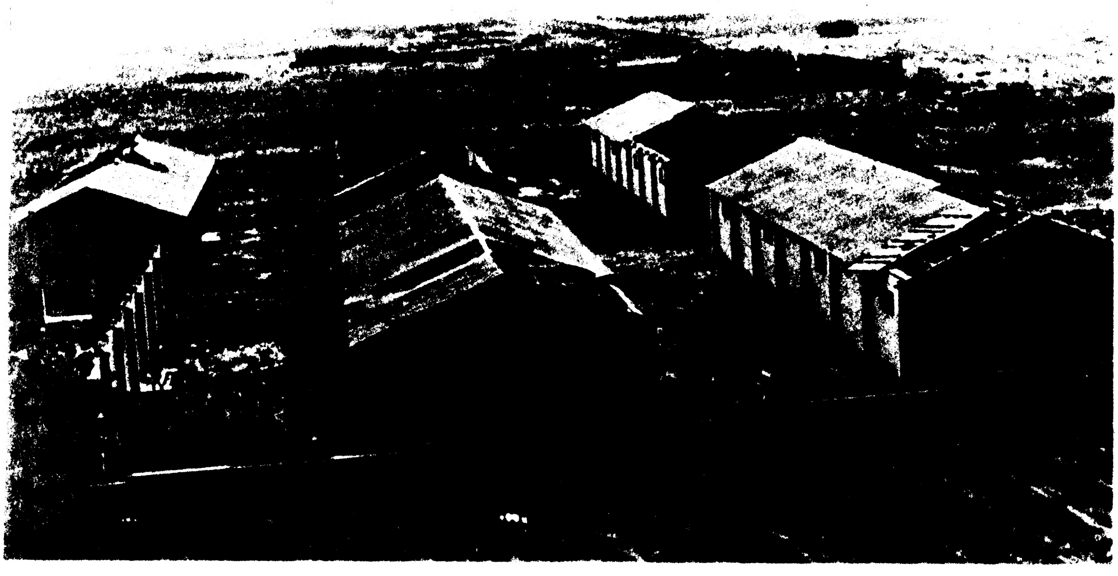
10. Two boys in Arghastan





11. War debris on the road near Kandahar

12. Damaged warehouses west of Kandahar

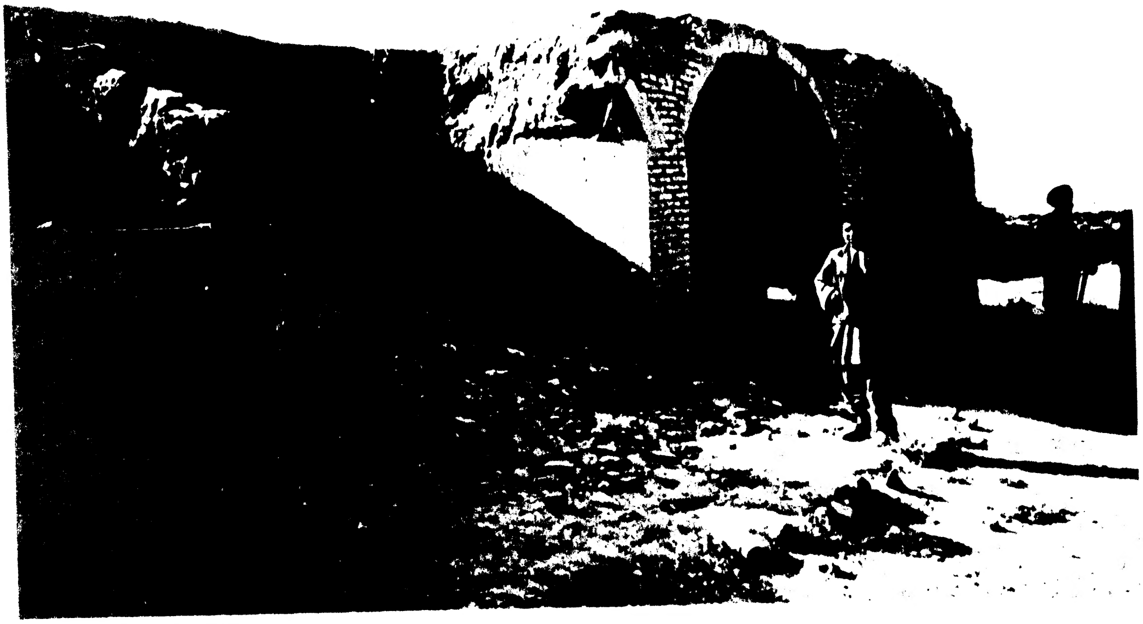




13. Destroyed housing in Arghandab

14. Building a kishmeshkhanah in Maiwand





15. Damage in the bazaar at Khogyamay (Arghastan)

16. Building in Maiwand

